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DATE: SEPTEMBER 14, 2009

TO: Department of Justice, Registration Unit

FAX NUMBER: (202) 514-2836

FROM: Qorvis Communications, LLC. (202) 496-1000

PAGE COUNT: 2 – (Including Cover Page)

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Saudi Ambassador Responds to Congressional Letter on Peace in the Middle East

WASHINGTON [September 13, 2009] – Saudi Ambassador to the United States Adel Al-Jubeir responded to a July 31 letter, co-signed by Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA) and Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA) and more than 220 Members of the House of Representatives, to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. In the letter, the Members noted the Saudi-sponsored Arab Peace Initiative and urged Saudi Arabia to make a dramatic gesture towards Israel as a confidence building measure to promote peace.

In his response, Ambassador Al-Jubeir thanked the Members for their interest in promoting peace in the Middle East and stated: “Over the years, Saudi Arabia has taken clear positions that attest to its desire to see this long-standing conflict resolved equitably and permanently.”

Ambassador Al-Jubeir outlined the requirements for peace which are enshrined in numerous international resolutions and contained in the Arab Peace Initiative. These include Israeli withdrawal of all Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem, the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and a just settlement for Palestinian refugees in exchange for recognition, an end to the conflict, security, peace and normal relations with all Arab countries.

The Ambassador also reiterated the Saudi position that an incremental approach to peace, or one built on confidence-building measures, will not succeed. “It has not succeeded over the past three decades and, we believe, will not succeed today.” The Ambassador cited as an example the issue of Israeli settlers in Palestinian territories: in 1979, when the Camp David Accords were signed, the number of settlers was about 5,000. By the time the Madrid Peace Conference was held in 1991, the number reached 100,000, and by the time the Annapolis Peace Conference was convened in 2007, the number of settlers had exceeded 200,000. In the past, a number of confidence-building measures were undertaken, but no peace was achieved.

“It is our firm view that resolution of this conflict does require outlining the final settlement at the outset, followed by prompt resumption of negotiations on all final status issues – borders, Jerusalem, water, security and refugees – with a deadline set for their early conclusion. The focus must be on the final settlement and on the final peace, not on an incremental process. This will make the final outcome clear to all parties, and thereby undermine the ability of extremists on both sides to delay or derail the movement to peace.”

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In addition, the Ambassador underlined the importance of continued, active U.S. involvement necessary to effectively move toward peace: "It is also absolutely imperative for the United States to play an active and robust role in the negotiations, as history has shown."

To view the letter, please [click here](#). For more information on Saudi Arabia's efforts to promote Middle East peace or on the Arab Peace Initiative, please visit www.SaudiEmbassy.net.

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